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ABSTRACT

A practicum was developed to help preservice teachers practice reading theories learned in the college classroom during the three-week field experience portion of the class. Preservice teachers at a Christian college in a small, rural, midwestern town had few opportunities to implement theories learned during field experience. A literature review and personal ideas contributed to the development of six solution strategies and three outcomes. The outcomes involved writing journal entries, developing lesson plans, and teaching these lessons during structured observations. Results indicated that: (1) 34 of 39 preservice teachers used 6 to 8 theory-to-practice skills in their journal writings; (2) 21 of 37 preservice teachers incorporated 4 of 5 theory-based components in lesson plans; and (3) 7 of 37 teachers used 4 of 5 theory-based guidelines during observation. (Contains 23 references and three tables of data. Appendixes present a theory-to-practice problem-solving skills list, a lesson plan checklist, and an observation summary sheet.) (Author/RS)

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ED 380 792

Helping Preservice Teachers in Reading Methods Field Experience Implement Theories Learned in the College Classroom through Journals, Lesson Plans, and Structured Observations

by

Sally L. Castle

Cluster 64

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A Practicum I Report Presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
1995

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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This practicum report was submitted by Sally L. Castle under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

February 27, 1995
Date of Final Approval of Report

June S Delano
June Delano, Ph.D., Adviser

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ABSTRACT

Helping Preservice Teachers in Reading Methods Field Experience Implement Theories Learned in the College Classroom through Journals, Lesson Plans, and Structured Observations. Castle, Sally L., 1995: Practicum Report, Nova Southeastern University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Teaching Reading/Training of Teachers/Theory-to-Practice/Implementing Reading Theories/Classroom Practice

This practicum was developed to help preservice teachers practice reading theories learned in the college classroom during the 3 week field experience of the portion of the class. Preservice teachers had few opportunities to implement theories learned during field experience.

A literature review and personal ideas contributed to the development of 6 solution strategies and 3 outcomes. The outcomes involved writing journals entries, developing lesson plans, and teaching these lessons during structured observations.

The results showed 34 of 39 preservice teachers used 6 to 8 theory-to-practice skills in their journal writings. Twenty-one of 37 preservice incorporated 4 of 5 theory-based components in lesson plans. Seven of 37 teachers used 4 of 5 theory-based guidelines during observation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community was a small, midwestern, rural town with approximately 3,000 residents. The community was located near natural gorges where early wheat and corn grist mills used the natural water falls to turn the paddles of the mills. There were beautiful rolling hillsides with farms scattered along the rural countryside. The community economics was primarily based in farming and in the Christian college located in the community. The community was basically free of the social dilemmas of larger cities, and was socially rooted in the Christian influences of the local churches and the Christian college.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The work setting of the writer was located on the campus of the Christian college within the community. The college had the primary purpose of offering students an education consistent with biblical truths. The college had an enrollment of 2,300 students from 46 states and 14 nations.

The college curriculum contained 75 areas of study. The area of studies included a liberal arts core curriculum and a required Bible minor. A daily chapel service was an integrative portion of the Bible requirement, and the heartbeat of the Christian college life.

One of the 75 areas of study was in the field of teacher training and education. It offered instruction with the purpose of training preservice teachers for public, Christian, and missionary schools. The program certified teachers in sevan different areas of instruction, and they were automatically certified by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). Teacher certification included reciprocal agreements with 35 states.

One of the areas of instruction within the field of teacher education and training was the elementary education major area. Thirty quarter hours constituted this area of curriculum concentration.

The writer's role and work setting was within the elementary education major area. The writer was an assistant professor of education with responsibilities for teaching the reading methods course and supervising the reading field experience. The writer had a rich background for the responsiblities within the work setting. The background included being a classroom teacher for 18 years, assumed responsibilities as a

reading department head for 5 years, completed a master's degree in special education, and received an educational specialist degree in curriculum, supervision and instruction. The writer was also a qualifed seminar speaker in topics relating to reading disabilities, curriculum, and program implementation.

The preservice teachers enrolled in the writer's reading methods course had already been admitted to the education program. They had satisfactory completed foundation courses, acceptable scores on the Pre-Professional Skills Test (PPST), and a recommendation of the department's admissions interview committee.

The methods course consisted of 7 weeks of college classroom instruction and 3 weeks of field experience. The preservice teachers participated in field experience after successful completion of the 7 weeks of classroom instruction by receiving a C grade or higher. During the field experience, the preservice teachers were placed in public school classrooms that are located within a 50-mile radius of the campus. The field experience portion of the methods course was the last 3 weeks of the 10 week methods course. The field experience was intended to provide opportunities for implementation of theories learned during the 7 week methods class instruction.

It was the writer's responsibility to be a change agent within the work setting to help solve problems for the improvement of education and training of the

preservice teachers. The preservice teachers were in their last year of the college educational program, and were soon to be the future teachers of the children attending school in the 21st century.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem was that preservice teachers involved in the reading methods course do not have many opportunities to implement reading theories learned in the college classroom. During field experience, preservice teachers wrote many traditional lesson plans, and followed the traditional teaching routines of cooperating teachers. They had limited opportunities to continue developing an educational philosophy about teaching reading from the confusion of theory-to-practice during field experience.

Problem description needed to be viewed from a common understanding of the wording and terms being used in relationship to the problem. The terms included field experience, field notes, traditionally-based teaching methodology, theory-based teaching methodolology, cooperating teacher, home school, methods course, inquiry journals, and triad. Field experience was a 3 week period at the end of a 10 week reading methods course when students were placed in a public or private school classroom that was located within a 50-mile

radius of the college campus. Student field notes were notes taken by the student during field experience. They covered any area of concern, self-evaluation and thoughts by the student. Traditionally-based teaching methodology included direct-instruction, and basal methods with books, workbooks, and teacher's editions. Traditionally-based teaching methodology was basically teacher-oriented. Theory-based teaching methodology included literature, trade books, thematic units, and whole language. This methodology was child-oriented. The cooperating teacher was the teacher in the classroom where the preservice teacher was placed during field experience. Home school was the school where the field experience was occurring. Methods course was the college course where methods were taught and it contained the field experience. Inquiry journals were journals written by the preservice teachers containing questions on teaching and planning for the methods course professor to answer. Triad consisted of the preservice teacher, cooperating teacher and supervising professor.

Relevant background information surfaced from student resources and structured observation checklists. Lesson plans of the preservice teachers showed many traditional lesson plans. The preservice teachers' lesson plans for the reading methods course taught during the previous quarter showed 351 traditional plans written of the 664 plans submitted during field

experience. Many of the plans were written using the cooperating teacher's plans. There were many cooperating teachers in the field using traditional methodologies. Field notes of the preservice teachers revealed concern over few opportunities within the field experience to practice theory. Structured observation checklists showed traditional teaching methods being taught during observation by the supervising professors.

The field experience of the reading methods course needed to be able to provide more opportunities to implement theories learned in the college classroom, and given input from the triad to help continue to develop an educational philosophy of reading. The problem was evident based on the resources of the preservice teachers and structured observation checklists. Personal conversations with other professors who taught other methods courses at the college shared with the writer the common concern about the theory-to-practice problem during the field experience.

Problem Documentation

The writer initiated a search for problem documentation using the preservice teachers' lesson plans and field notes from field experience in the previous quarter methods course. The structured observation checklists filled out by supervising professors were also reviewed. The writer had personal conversations

with other methods course professors in the work setting concerning the theory-to-practice situation.

During the previous quarter, the reading methods course had an enrollment of 29 preservice teachers. Summer break and summer jobs prevented gathering all the lesson plans from the class members written during field experience. The writer was able to obtain lesson plans from 24 of 29 class members. Of the 664 lesson plans gathered, 220 were whole language-based, 351 were traditionally-based, and 93 were literature-based. The writer was able to find all the class member's structured observation checklists filled out by the supervising professors during field experience in the department's academic files.

The structured observation checklists showed evidence that 16 out of 29 structured observation checklists reflected a traditional lesson being taught during observation. The lesson plan taught during observation was attached to the checklist.

Field notes revealed a variety of concerns, self-evaluations and questions. The field notes written by the preservice teachers during field experience were written in a personal style with questions, concerns and self-evaluations about what they would have liked to have done in the classroom if given the opportunity.

The writer concluded that the theory-to-practice problem existed. The conclusion was based on the

evidence found in preservice teachers' lesson plans, field notes, and structured observation checklists from the methods class and field experience conducted during the previous quarter.

Causative Analysis

The causes of the problem within the work setting were related to people, procedures, methods, and attitudes. An analysis of the causes included 5 different areas. There was a lack of communication within the triad. Even though a thorough handbook was given to each cooperating teacher at the beginning of field experience, factors of time, schedule, extra meetings, and sometimes annual demands relating to levies, budget cuts, and classroom changes, caused the cooperating teacher to not be able to "focus" on the college student. The needs were different within the triad, and there was a resulting breakdown in communication.

There were differences in educational philosophies between the college professors and field experience cooperating teachers. A hand count was taken during the last class in reading methods the previous quarter. The hand count showed that 16 of 29 preservice teachers' cooperating teachers had an educational philosophy different from the methods professor's philosophy. Cooperating teachers in the field lacked formal

instruction in supervisory and evaluating skills. Cooperating teachers were often given no choice as to a field placement, but were told by the building principal that it was his/her turn to take a preservice teacher.

One building principal shared information with the writer during the previous quarter of field experience that the district had never offerred a seminar on supervisory and evaluating skills for cooperating teachers. The principal felt this kind of seminar was important.

The school setting and politics influenced the field experience classroom. An example was that some of the schools required first year teachers to use a more traditional teaching methodology.

Preservice teachers had inadequate skills for writing thoughtful reflective/inquiry journals. Field notes rarely touched upon the overall objectives and purposes of a reflective/inquiry journal. Most of the comments were on surface information about the lesson that was taught. An example of surface information was the number of pages covered in the lesson.

Relationship of the Problem to Literature

When the preservice teacher entered the field experience classroom of the college methods course, a problem surrounded implementing the theories learned in the college classroom. The relationship between the

problem and related literature showed the similarities of problems, evidences, and causes with other writers in this area. It also traced various aspects of the problem within the field experience. It related how other writers treated similar problems, and evaluated the productiveness of the writers' plans. Even though the writer's problem was reviewed based on the evidence and causes in the work setting, there was a bridge of commonality that related what other writers' had done with similar problems in other work settings.

Preservice teachers do not have opportunities to reflect on decisions concerning teaching. Conversations and observations with teachers within the field who used theoretically based teaching methods affected the preservice teachers' developing theories of practice and how to teach children (Cochran-Smith, 1991). Preservice teachers had few opportunities to teach using theoretically based methods during field experience.

There was a lack of an immersion-type field experience that provided a variety of experiences to help preservice teachers develop theories of practice for teaching children (Gipe, Duffy & Richards, 1989). An immersion-type field experience provided opportunities for the preservice teacher to spend time in various grade levels, staff meetings, and various other duties during field experience. Many professionals believed that field experience was not

meaningful to the practical tasks that confront teachers in schools. Preservice teachers were placed in one classroom with one cooperating teacher, and do not have the opportunity to witness the holistic aspect of teaching that an immersion-type field experience provides. A few of the reasons for this lack of opportunity rested in stagnation, fear of trends, and lack of trust (Smith, 1992). Meanwhile, field experience fed the "status-quo" of the classroom (Blanton & Moorman, 1985). Building on what Cochran-Smith (1991) shared about the effects of conversation and observations with teachers who taught theoretically was the importance that field experiences do not portray the epistemological beliefs of the students (Pape & Smith, 1991). Theory, practice, and epistemological beliefs were separate ingredients that were not blended to develop or foster developmental and pedagogical thinking for the benefit of teaching children.

Another aspect of the problem was related directly to cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers were not trained in supervisory/evaluative skills, and there was a lack of incentives and rewards to be effective cooperating teachers (Sandholtz & Merseth, 1992). It was further evidenced that cooperating teachers do not know the goals, objectives, and requirements of the field experience (Carter, 1992). This lack of awareness caused cooperating teachers to not be able to identify

with the realities of the field experience and the needs of the preservice teacher.

There was a lack of collaboration and communication between the school and college on an even larger scale than just the awareness of the goals, objectives, and requirements of the field experience. Schools and colleges do not share common goals or partnerships for educating future teachers (Lasley, Matczynski & Williams, 1992).

Collaboration and goal-sharing partnerships involved many lines of communication. This was difficult when there was a conflict in educational philosophies within the teaching triad (Menter, 1989), (Strickland, 1990) & (Dowhower, 1990). The conflict was a situational irony (Dowhower, 1990). Situational irony was when there was a difference between what is and what should be.

Preservice teachers do not observe the recommended theoretical practices. Preservice teachers do not have a sound personal philosophy about how a child learns to read and what reading was before field experience. The lack of a sound personal philosophy about reading added to the confusion and frustration upon entering the reading field experience.

The review of related literature confirmed the need to deal effectively with the theory-to-practice problem. The preservice teachers who were now in the methods course and field experience will be the future teachers.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goal and Expectations

The following goal was projected for this practicum. The goal was to improve the implementation of theory-based reading methods by preservice teachers in the field experience classroom.

Expected Outcomes

The following outcomes were projected for the practicum.

1. Preservice teachers will be able to write a reflective/inquiry journal entry using 6 of 8 theory-to-practice problem-solving skills (see Appendix A).
2. Preservice teachers will be able to successfully write a sample lesson plan with 4 of 5 components reflecting theory-based teaching methods (see Appendix B).
3. Preservice teachers will be able to successfully teach a theory-based lesson with 4 of 5 ingredients on an observation checklist while

being observed (see Appendix C).

Measurement of Outcomes

A reflective/inquiry journal entry, a sample lesson plan, and a structured observation checklist were the three evaluation tools. They were used to measure the outcomes of the practicum.

The three measurements were ones that will best reflect a picture of the outcomes of this practicum. The measurements were designed around the reflective-inquiry journal, lesson plans and field experience observations.

The measurement for outcome one was a reflective/inquiry journal entry. The entry was written in methods class during the last class session of the quarter. During the three-month implementation period, the preservice teachers developed skills on journal writing relating to the 8 problem-solving skills. During the last methods class of the quarter, directions were given by the writer to the preservice teachers, and then they wrote a reflective/inquiry journal entry about the last day of field experience. The outcome stated that the journal needed to contain at least 6 of 8 theory-to-practice problem-solving skills taught in methods class by the writer. The measurement tool for the journal entry was a Theory-to-Practice Problem-Solving Skills List (see

Appendix A). The measurement tool consisted of a list of 8 areas of problem-solving skills that were discussed by the writer in methods class. The writer reviewed the journal entries that were written on the last day of methods class, and placed a checkmark beside each skill that was incorporated in the entry.

The measurement for outcome two was an evaluation tool of the sample lesson plan outcome. It was used during the last class session of the reading methods course. Directions were given by the writer to the preservice teachers, then they wrote a sample lesson plan that contained at least 4 of 5 components of a theory-based lesson plan. The writer specified the subject area and grade level of the sample lesson to be written. A Lesson Plan Checklist was used by the writer as the measurement tool for this outcome (see Appendix B). The checklist contained a list of the 5 components of a theory-based lesson plan. The writer tabulated what components were incorporated in the writing of the individual lesson plan by the preservice teachers.

The measurement for outcome three was a theory-based lesson was used during the last scheduled observation in field experience. The preservice teachers were told during the introduction to the field experience portion of the methods class that the final structured observation by the supervising professor was an observation of a theory-based lesson plan. The

professor used an Observation Summary Sheet during observation as the evaluation tool for the third outcome of this practicum (see Appendix C). The summary sheet contained a list of the 5 areas of observation for a theory-based lesson. The preservice teacher taught a lesson that was to show at least 4 of 5 ingredients of a theory-based lesson plan as outlined on the Observation Summary Sheet. The preservice and cooperating teachers knew the day and time of observation. They worked and planned together so that the observed lesson was integrated into what preceeded and followed it based on the cooperating teacher's methodology.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Preservice teachers involved in reading methods field experience have few opportunities to implement theories learned in the college classroom. Some possible solution strategies for this problem surfaced from reviewing the literature, reflection by the writer on personal ideas, and blending personal and other writers' ideas for new possible solutions.

Field experiences needed to be a time of learning and reflection for preservice teachers. An immersion-type field experience included a time for learning and reflection (Gipe, Duffy & Richards, 1989). It provided opportunities to discuss with other professionals the evaluation and reflective thinking on the lesson presented. An immersion-type field experience helped the preservice teachers develop a personal educational philosophy as they learned about teaching and instruction.

Along with the immersion-type field experience was the development of a reflective/inquiry journal during

the duration of the methods course (Cochran-Smith, 1991). The journal entries included reflective thoughts on what preservice teachers observed, and learned during the immersion-type field experience. Inquiry entries provided an avenue of communication to the cooperating teacher, supervising professors, and to the preservice teachers' personal inquiries as to questions for clarification, understanding, and professional development.

An extension of the use of journals during methods class and field experience was a reflection model. Using a reflection model, the journal entries were analyzed and coded measuring the depth of reflection on teaching methods during field experience (Pape & Smith, 1991). The analysis and coding determined whether the preservice teachers were seriously reflecting or presenting situational pictures and acceptance of the "status-quo" of teaching and instruction.

Another possible solution strategy was the use of the DeFord Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) (DeFord, 1985) & (Strickland, 1990). The profile consisted of 36 statements about reading with a 5-point Likert response system. The profile ranged the reading orientations in areas of whole language, skills, and phonics. The strategy paired preservice and cooperating teachers with similar theoretical orientations to reading for placement during field experience. The

profile also measured changes in preservice teachers' theoretical orientations to reading during methods instruction and field experience.

The development of a field experience model helped incorporate integration of the methods course with the field classrooms (Ferrell & Howley, 1988). The strategy involved individualization of the methods course to meet the needs of the preservice teachers. The individualization included varying timelines to meet individual needs, clinical experiences that reflected theory learned, and professors that modeled the theory in the college classroom. The integrative nature of the model provided communication, consistency of objectives and goals, and a beneficial two-way collegiality between the home and college classrooms.

Another strategy that was similar to the integrative model was the professional development schools. Professional development schools used an inducements/contributions theory to develop collaborative cooperating teachers for field experience classrooms (Rosberg, 1989) & (Zeichner, 1992). This strategy provided intrinsic and extrinsic inducements and contributions that helped entice professional teachers to enter into collaborative partnerships with the college for the purpose of training preservice teachers. It also offerred a two-way avenue for collegiality, collaboration, and professional

development.

Other strategies came from gleaming ideas from literature and blending these ideas with personal ones from reflection, inquiry, and philosophical beliefs about teaching and learning. One idea for a solution strategy was conducting a seminar for cooperating teachers on evaluative and supervisory skills that would be taught before field placements. The seminar would be at the home school, and last for one hour. The cooperating teachers would receive .1 Continuing Education Unit (C.E.U.) from the state education department. This solution strategy would be possible with permission from the college chairperson and the home school system administration.

Another personal solution strategy was to use study circles within the methods course to address theory-to-practice problems and issues as they surfaced in the methods course. A study circle could be initiated at any point in the methods class to help discuss theory-to-practice problems in small groups. Reflective/inquiry journals would be written for the duration of the reading methods. The preservice teachers would receive instructions on how to write a thoughtful reflective/inquiry journal. The instructions would include precise meanings of higher level thinking skills that include observations, questions, speculations, synthesis, revisions, and obtainment of

information.

Another solution strategy included lectures and discussions within the methods class about educational issues relating to reading instruction to help preservice teachers in the continuing development of a personal philosophy about teaching and reading instruction.

Another strategy brought cooperating teachers to the college methods classroom to participate in a panel discussion with students and supervising professors concerning theory-to-practice problems. This strategy helped build communication skills as well as a better understanding of the responsibilities and concerns of each member of the teaching triad.

Each solution strategy from literature and ones developed by the writer were described in the earlier portion of this chapter. Each solution needed to be evaluated in terms of the special design of each work setting, the population within the work setting, and resources or materials. Some solution strategies were not be a good fit even though they were good strategy solutions, and may be appropriate for other work settings.

An immersion-type field experience provided a broader experience for preservice teachers. It also required a great deal of organization and planning for implementation. The organization included adequate

information on appropriate experiences. The idea of a diverse field experience was to be applauded by the writer, but with the writer's work setting, a 3-week immersion-type field experience would spread the experience too thin for the time allotted.

The development of a reflective/inquiry journal for the duration of the methods course was a solution strategy that could benefit the preservice teachers if implemented in an effective manner. First, the preservice teachers needed to understand exactly what a journal of this nature involved. A reflective/inquiry journal was a good solution strategy within the writer's work setting.

A reflection model analyzed and coded journal entries that measured the depth of reflection on teaching methods during field experience. Analyzing and coding journal entries needed to be used in very specific situations of implementation. The reflection model journals were coded according to depth of reflection rather than by using problem-solving skills. The writer's evaluation of this strategy solution rested in the judgmental factor of a coding system as presented in the reflection model. A coding system was too structured for the purposes of this solution strategy within the writer's work setting.

The DeFord Orientation to Reading Profile (TORP) was a possible solution strategy. The TORP was used to

measure change in orientation to reading. There was benefits as well as drawbacks along this line of thinking. A benefit was that the cooperating and preservice teachers had a better understanding and agreement on reading and instruction. A limitation was the narrow exposure of preservice teachers to teaching orientations they already identified with.

The integrative field experience model was evaluated by the writer as a very plausible solution strategy. The goals and objectives were very applicable to the solution of helping implement more theory in field experience teaching. It improved communication and understanding within the triad. The writer saw implementation of this solution after one or two years of preliminary preparation with the college and home school settings.

The professional development school was an excellent solution strategy. It was an ideal that would helped solve many of the problems relating to the theory-to-practice problem. If it was to be implemented within the writer's work setting, it needed to be a stated long-term goal of both the home and college communities.

The solution strategy of a seminar for cooperating teachers covering evaluative and supervisory skills seemed very beneficial for the preservice teachers. Many cooperating teachers never had a structured

class to help them understand the goals, objectives, and expectations of the field experience. The evaluation process for preservice teachers was one that needed to be understood to better help the preservice teachers in the classroom. This solution strategy was appropriate for the writer's work setting as all of the preservice teachers were placed in one school system for the field experience implementation time. It also offered a .1 Continuing Education Unit (C.E.U.) that was an extrinsic enticement for the cooperating teachers. The resources involved preparation by the writer, development of a prospectus, and a 1 hour in-service time on the part of the cooperating teachers.

The use of study circles within the methods class addressed theory-to-practice problems as they surfaced. A study circle was a group of students designated to problem-solve a particular area using a matches guideline. Use of the study circle was a very useful and effective solution strategy within the writer's work setting. It was a strategy that helped to deal with the theory-to-practice problem in an on-going fashion.

The involvement of lecture/discussion in class was a solution strategy that helped preservice teachers understand the complicated aspect of conflicts in educational philosophies. It was important for the preservice teachers that they understood where another teacher was coming from concerning teaching and

instruction. This was an appropriate solution strategy as it helped develop a base of understanding before the preservice teachers entered the home schools for field experience which for many were their first experience.

Cooperating teachers coming to the college methods classroom for a panel discussion was a solution that provided an opportunity for communication. The panel discussion was structured and involved the whole class through a question/answer period. It was very workable within the writer's work setting with the availability of 2 other methods professors and several cooperating teachers.

Description of Selected Solutions

The goal for the practicum was to improve the implementation of theory-based reading methods in the field experience classroom. The 6 strategies included reflective/inquiry journals, a panel discussion, writng lesson plans, a seminar, study circles, and structured observations.

The first solution strategy was reflective/inquiry journal writing. Reflective/inquiry journals were written by the preservice teachers throughout the 3 month implementation period. The entries were written during the last 10 minutes of methods class and daily during field experience. The entries were checked by the writer for incorporation of the problem-solving

skills. Problem-solving skills were discussed by the writer during class sessions until the 8 skills were covered.

The justification for this strategy was that reflective/inquiry journals helped preservice teachers develop reflection and inquiry relating to problem solving. It also helped the preservice teachers develop a philosophy concerning teaching and instruction (Cochran-Smith, 1991), (Gipe, Duffy & Richards, 1989), & (Pape & Smith, 1991).

The second solution strategy was related to the lack of communication within the triad. The triad consisted of the cooperating teacher, preservice teacher, and college supervisor. A panel discussion was used during methods class. The panel consisted of 2 preservice teachers, 2 cooperating teachers, and 2 cooperating teachers. The panel addressed issues, answered questions, and shared reading orientations as they related to theory and practice. The writer gave the panel members a list of issues, questions, and concerns to help get the discussion going. There was a question/answer period at the end of the discussion.

The justification for using a panel discussion was that it provided an avenue of communication for the triad. Communication helped each member of the triad to communicate and understand each member clearer. It also gave all members an opportunity for listening and

participating (Lasley, Matczynski & Williams, 1992).

The third solution strategy was writing theory-based lesson plans. The writer taught the preservice teachers how to write a theory-based lesson plan. The presentations included 5 basic ingredients of a theory-based lesson plan. Preservice teachers incorporated theory orientation, presented goals/objectives, laid out procedures, evaluated through journaling, and listed theory-to-practice improvements.

The justification of using this solution strategy rested in the fact that a lesson plan was the foundation upon which good teaching and instruction was built. The ingredients placed in a lesson plan determined the direction and outcome of learning. Writing a theory-based lesson plan helped the preservice teachers implement new teaching practices based on their theoretical beliefs.

The fourth solution strategy involved supervisory/evaluative skills for cooperating teachers. A seminar for cooperating teachers took place at the home school. The 1 hour seminar was presented by the writer. It included skills on supervision and evaluation relating to the responsibilities of a cooperating teacher. The teachers who participated received a .1 Continuing Education Unit (C.E.U.) from the state education department. The fee for the C.E.U. credit was paid for by the college's department of education.

Approval for the seminar and fee payment was agreed upon by the college department chairperson.

Justification for this solution strategy stemmed from research that showed many teachers who assumed responsibility for preservice teachers do not have the supervisory or evaluative skills needed for fulfillment of the responsibilities of being a cooperating teacher. Many teachers enjoyed this responsibility, but felt inadequately equipped (Sandholtz & Merseth, 1992) & (Carter, 1992).

The fifth solution strategy involved study circles for discussion of theory-to-practice problems. Study circles took place throughout the 3 month implementation period when specific questions concerning theory-to-practice surfaced in methods class. There was 1 structured study circle. The study circle discussed effects of school setting and politics on the field experience classrooms. The writer presented information on these 2 areas, and the class broke into study circles, and discussed the various aspects of the 2 influences. The circles presented a conclusion to the other members of the methods class during the following methods class.

Study circles offered an informal avenue for study and discussion of various issues. Study circles were used by the writer for answering or discussing questions that came up spontaneously by the preservice teachers.

The sixth solution strategy was structured observations. As part of the methods course field experience, the preservice teachers were observed by the supervising professors at least twice for field experience evaluation. The writer observed the preservice teacher once during the last week of field experience. During this structured observation time, the preservice teacher taught a theory-based lesson plan. The date and time of the observation was planned in advance.

Justification for this solution strategy was that preservice teachers understood what was involved in teaching a theory-based lesson plan. The plan was an integrated one that often extended across the curriculum. Children learned more when the instruction was child-centered and participatory in nature (Strickland, 1990).

Report of Action Taken

The first solution strategy was reflective/inquiry journal writing. First, the preservice teachers learned what a reflective/inquiry journal was, and how this kind of journal writing was used to help develop skills for theory-to practice problem-solving. Problem-solving skills were introduced one at a time to the class. The writer gave certain situations or scenarios in class. The preservice teachers used the last 10 minutes of

methods class, and wrote reflective/inquiry journal entries. They used the problem-solving skills as they wrote journal entries concerning the situation or scenario. The writer collected the journals every other week, and checked the progress of using theory-to-practice problem-solving skills in their entries.

The writer noted the variations in journaling ability within the class. Some of the preservice teachers found journal writing difficult. They shared that they did not enjoy writing, but shared comments that they felt reflective/inquiry journal writing was a very important skill for improving teaching, and developing a philosohy about teaching.

The writer used a panel discussion as the second solution strategy. The panel consisted of 2 cooperating teachers, 1 elementary building principal, and 2 supervising methods professors. The panel was going to include preservice teachers, but the writer decided at the last minute, that there was not enough time allotted to have the preservice teachers on the panel and have a question/answer period. The writer felt the question/question time was more directed to communication. The panel addressed issues that related to theory-to-practice.

The preservice teachers used the question/answer time with many questions directed to the panel. They were particularly interested in how the panel members

bacame involved in making changes in their work setting. One of the cooperating teachers was thrown into whole language, and not given a choice. The teacher learned theory on the spot. The other teacher was involved in a pilot study for integrated language arts. The teachers shared that fear of the unknown was a big factor in resistance to theory-to-practice implementation.

The time allotment was the biggest problem with implementing the solution strategy. At least 1 hour needed to be allotted to the question/answer time. The members of the panel shared that they only scratched the surface of the theory-to-practice problem. In the short time frame, the preservice teachers caught a glimpse of different sides of the theory-to-practice problem.

The third strategy was writing theory-based lesson plans. The writer taught 5 basic ingredients in a theory-based plan one at a time during methods class. The ingredients included theory orientation, goals/objectives, natural connections, evaluation, and theory-to-practice improvements.

The preservice teachers wrote lesson plans in class that incorporated the theory-based ingredients. This strategy was difficult, because there was such a wide range of abilities in this area. Some preservice teachers caught on to lesson plan writing very quickly while others struggled from the first step of

understanding theory orientation.

The writer used micro-teaching as a tool that helped the preservice teachers in lesson plan writing. They wrote a complete unit plan that included 4 to 5 theory-based lessons. They used 1 of the plans in a micro-teaching lesson that was video-taped and presented in front of classmates. There was a favorable improvement in lesson plan writing when they saw the total incorporation of the lesson in the lesson presentation.

The fourth solution strategy involved presenting a seminar to the cooperating teachers that volunteered to have preservice teachers during the methods field experience. The seminar's topic was supervisory/evaluative skills for cooperating teachers.

The seminar took place at the home schools. The 1 hour seminar was presented in 5 different school buildings. The seminars were very informative, and received with enthusiasm. The cooperating teachers shared how much they appreciated the college being thorough and explicit through use of the seminar, and a detailed handbook.

The writer wrote a prospectus for the cooperating teacher seminar. A prospectus was mandated by the state department if the participants of the seminar received Continuing Education Units (C.E.U.) from the state education department. The writer turned the prospectus

into the state department. It was at this point that an unexpected event occurred. There were changes from the previous year within the state department concerning seminar procedures for obtaining C.E.U. credits. The minimum C.E.U. credit that was accepted for a seminar was .4 rather than .1 credits. The team professor and the writer decided to offer the additional 3 hours of seminar time if the cooperating teachers desired. As it turned out, the cooperating teachers were not interested in the additional credits, because they were master level teachers that already had required credits.

The fifth solution strategy included study circles. Study circles were initiated by the writer during the 3 month implementation period of the practicum. The class was broken down into groups containing 5 to 6 members. A leader and secretary was appointed for each group. The group studied areas such as inclusion, discipline, alternative assessment, and ability grouping.

The preservice teachers enjoyed working in study circles. The circles turned into class group reports. The preservice teachers wanted further information on these areas that were minimally reviewed within the study circles. The circles gave group presentations in front of the class. The class used rubrics for evaluation of the presentation.

The sixth solution strategy involved structured observations. The preservice teachers were observed by

the supervising professors during the last week of field experience. It was during this structured evalulation that the preservice teacher presented a theory-based lesson plan.

A change was made during implementation of this solution strategy. It was planned that the writer would observe all the preservice teachers during this last week. Due to a few problems relating to other areas of field experience responsibilties, the writer did not observe all of the preservice teachers. The other 2 supervising professors helped with the structured observations. There was not enough time to properly explain the evaluation tool due to schedules and available time. The other professors were not sure what they were looking for during observation. As a result, they used the college's standard evaluation form, and then the writer transferred the information concerning observation to the evaluation tool. The strategy solution did not work out smoothly. There were differences in evaluation styles between the 3 supervising professors.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem within the work setting was that preservice teachers involved in the reading methods course do not have many opportunities to implement reading theories learned in the college classroom. During field experience, preservice teachers wrote many traditional lesson plans, and followed the traditional teaching routines of cooperating teachers. They had limited opportunities of developing a continuing educational philosophy about teaching reading from the confusion of theory-to-practice during field experience.

There were 3 outcomes projected for the practicum. The 3 outcomes were that preservice teachers wrote a reflective/inquiry journal entry using 6 of 8 theory-to-practice problem-solving skills, wrote a lesson plan incorporating 4 of 5 theory-based ingredients, and taught a lesson with 4 of 5 ingredients observed during a structured observation. A reflective/inquiry journal entry, a sample lesson plan, and a structured observation were the 3 tools used for measuring the outcomes of the practicum. The 3 measurements were one

that best reflected a picture of the outcomes of this practicum.

Outcome #1 stated that preservice teachers will be able to write a reflective/inquiry journal entry using 6 of 8 theory-to-practice problem-solving skills at the end of the implementation period of the practicum. The table below showed the results of this outcome as measured using the Theory-to-Practice Problem-solving Skills List. Table 1 below showed the 8 problem-solving skills. The numbers opposite the skill showed the number of preservice teachers that used the skill while writing their reflective/inquiry journal entry.

Table 1
Theory-to-Practice Problem-Solving Skills List
(maximum 39)

Skills	Total Number of Skills
DESCRIPTIVELY PRECISE LANGUAGE	33
HIGHER LEVEL THINKING SKILLS	38
ORGANIZATION	35
DIALOGING WITH SELF	38
BUILDING AN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY	30
REFLECTION / INQUIRY ON CHANGE	35
REFLECTION / INQUIRY ON CONFLICT / DISAGREEMENT	38
READING TEACHER IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES	10

Outcome #2 stated that preservice teachers will be able to successfully write a sample lesson plan with 4 of 5 components reflecting theory-based teaching methods. A Lesson Plan Checklist was used to measure the results of this outcome. Table 2 showed the 5 listed components of a theory-based lesson plan. Under 2 of the components, there were sub-components involving special portions of the lesson plan. The numbers opposite each component showed the number of preservice teachers that used the component in writing their theory-based lesson plan.

Table 2
Lesson Plan Checklist
(maximum 37)

Components	Number of Total Sub-Components	Number of Total Components
THEORY ORIENTATION		32
GOALS / OBJECTIVES		36
NATURAL CONNECTIONS		31
Motivation & Set	23	
Specific Outline	30	
Individual Differences	24	
Summary	21	
Enrichment	20	
EVALUATION		9
Preservice Teacher	9	
Cooperating Teacher	9	
Field Notes	2	
THEORY-TO-PRACTICE IMPROVEMENTS		28

Outcome #3 stated that preservice teachers will be able to successfully teach a theory-based lesson with 4 of 5 ingredients on an observation checklist while being observed. An Observation Summary Sheet was used for tabulating the results. Table 3 showed the 5 listed ingredients of the observation. Four of the 5 ingredients had sub-totals that gave more description of the observation. The number opposite each ingredient showed the number of preservice teachers that were observed that showed the ingredient listed.

Table 3
Observation Summary Sheet
(maximum 37)

Ingredients	Number of Subtotal Observations	Number of Total Observations
THEORY ORIENTATION		30
Whole Language	0	
Literature Base	28	
Language Experience	2	
INTEGRATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM		8
Science	3	
Math	4	
Social Studies	5	
Music / Art / PE	0	
NATURAL CONNECTIONS		15
Process Writing	3	
Reading / Writing Connection	13	
READERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS		12
Handicapped	3	
Gifted	3	
Poor Readers	8	
Culturally / Linguistically Diverse	0	
VOCABULARY		21

Discussion

The 3 outcomes were carried out at the assigned times during the implementation period of the practicum.

Outcome #1 related to theory-to-practice problem-solving skills. Looking at Table 1, the table displayed the number of times each skill was used by the 39 preservice teachers. The first 7 skills were used by the majority of the group, but the area of difficulty was on the skill relating to reading teacher improvement opportunities. The writer believed that the difficulty was related to the lack of teaching experience by the preservice teachers. A base of experience with teaching reading allowed for more improvement opportunities by knowing what experiences had proven to be successful reading improvement opportunities. The opportunities were not recognized, and consequently they wrote nothing about them. Thirty-four of 39 preservice teachers met the 6 of 8 skill involvement expectation as described in Outcome #1.

Reflective/inquiry journal writing was difficult for some of the preservice students. While teaching the first skill concerning use of descriptively precise language, the majority of preservice teachers could not write this way. It helped them when the class wrote samples of descriptively precise language. It was at this point they noted the importance of using this skill for documentation, accountability, and decision-making

purposes.

After the journal entry outcome was written, the writer conducted a question/answer time about journal writing. Many of preservice teachers stated that they never knew what good journaling involved, and what a valuable tool it was for them to develop. When the preservice teachers noted the value, the activity was no longer viewed as "extra" work due to the writer's practicum.

The preservice teachers used journal writing during methods class for developing theory-to-practice problem-solving skills, and then used writing during field experience more to evaluate lessons. Pape & Smith (1991) used 2 types of journal writing. The first type was much like what the writer used during methods class. The other type of journaling wrote about practical theories. Practical theories showed the justification of the preservice choices about teaching.

During the last methods class, the preservice teachers were required to fill out an evaluation form for the college, and an evaluation form constructed by the course team professor. Six preservice students mentioned the amount they learned about teaching and themselves through journal writing. The writer felt that this was a very positive input as to the value by the preservice teachers to improving the theory-to-practice problem.

Outcome #2 related to theory-based lesson plans. Table 2 showed the 5 different components to the lesson plans. It was noted at this point the change in maximum from 39 on Table 1 to 37 on Table 2. During field experience, 2 of the preservice teachers left the program dropping the number of preservice students to 37. The total number of components showed the number of times the preservice teachers as a group used the different components in their plans. The results showed that 21 of 37 preservice teachers met the expected outcome by incorporating 4 of 5 components in their lesson plans.

The outcome was influenced by an unexpected occurrence. One of the field experience school systems began a new integrated language arts program. The language arts supervisor felt it was a good experience for the preservice teachers placed within that system to use the new lesson plans of the system. With this last minute change in lesson plan format, the practicum outcome took on a second priority. It also created some confusion for the preservice teachers. The writer was still satisfied with the outcome results with 23 of 37 preservice teachers incorporating 4 of 5 components of the lesson plan.

The preservice teachers really liked the new integrated language arts lesson plan. As the writer stated, the preservice teachers were confused with 3

different formats for lesson plans. The students learned that there were many ways lesson plans were written. They also learned that if they wanted to implement theory-based plans, they must have a focus and direction of the theory outlined in their lesson plan.

Outcome #3 related to structured observations. Table 3 showed the 5 different ingredients for a theory-based observation. The outcome showed that only 7 of 37 preservice teachers used 4 of 5 ingredients as reflected on the Observation Summary Sheet while being observed. The writer felt there were several factors that influenced this low score. At the last minute, a change was made in the writer's schedule that would not allow the writer to observe all the preservice students during the last week of field experience. As a result, there were 3 professors filling out the observation summary sheets. There were some inconsistencies in how the 3 professors filled out the forms. A second cause was directly related to the whole idea of being observed by your methods professors. The preservice teacher wrote a theory-based lesson plan, but had trouble carrying it out in front of evaluators. A third cause was the instrument itself. In evaluation, this field experience was a reading methods field experience. The preservice students were to concentrate on reading lessons rather than integration across the curriculum.

Strickland (1990) shared that when preservice

teachers were observed, sometimes the observer was observing the cooperating teacher's view on the teaching of reading rather than what the preservice teacher had brought to the classroom. This fact had an influence on the results of this outcome.

Recommendations

The writer developed 5 recommendations based on the writing, implementation, and results of the practicum.

1. Journaling should not be done at the end of the class period, but rather at the beginning of class or after a break. Preservice students are tired, hungry, and restless after a 4 hour reading methods class.
2. The writer needed to be more aware of the present reading programs in the schools where the preservice teachers were placed. One of the systems just started a new integrated language arts program that effected 1 of the practicum outcomes.
3. The recommendation to continue the panel discussion, journaling, introduction of a wider variety of theory-based lesson plans as part of the methods class syllabus content.
4. The use of journaling for developing an on-going personal theoretic view while preservice teachers moved through the education courses.

The theoretic view would then be added to their professional portfolio.

5. The seminar should include supervisory/evaluation skills, and a round table discussion that included certain scenarios or situations in field experience.

Dissemination

The writer of the practicum concluded with ideas for dissemination of this practicum.

1. Discussions at the departmental meeting of incorporation of journal writing as a formal skill that needed to be taught in the introductory education courses.
2. Recommendations of the practicum incorporated in future reading methods courses on campus.
3. The practicum abstract placed in the campus faculty newsletter.
4. The practicum placed in Nova Southeastern libary for dissemination through various electronic networks.
5. Seminars presented within other school districts, and at the American Christian Schools International (A.C.S.I.) Convention.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THEORY-TO-PRACTICE PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS LIST

THEORY-TO-PRACTICE PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS LIST

1. DESCRIPTIVELY PRECISE LANGUAGE _____

2. HIGHER LEVEL THINKING SKILLS _____
   QUESTION OBSERVATION
   SPECULATION
   SYNTHESIS REVISION

3. ORGANIZATION _____
   USE OF JOURNAL FORMAT
   DATE OF ENTRY INCLUDED

4. DIALOGUE WITH SELF _____
   INTERNAL INTERROGATION
   INTERNAL REFLECTION

5. BUILDING AN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY _____

6. REFLECTION/INQUIRY ON CHANGE _____

7. REFLECTION/INQUIRY ON
   CONFLICT/DISAGREEMENT _____

8. READING TEACHER IMPROVEMENT
   OPPORTUNITIES _____

TOTAL _____

Preservice Teacher's Name_____
Date_____

Comments_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX B

LESSON PLAN CHECKLIST

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LESSON PLAN CHECKLIST

1. THEORY ORIENTATION _____

2. GOALS/OBJECTIVES _____

3. PROCEDURES _____
   - MOTIVATION & SET
   - SPECIFIC OUTLINE
   - INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES
   - SUMMARY
   - ENRICHMENT

4. EVALUATION _____
   - PRESERVICE TEACHER
   - COOPERATING TEACHER
   - FIELD NOTES

5. THEORY-TO-PRACTICE IMPROVEMENTS _____

TOTAL _____

Preservice Teacher's Name_____
Date_____

Comments_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX C

OBSERVATION SUMMARY SHEET

OBSERVATION SUMMARY SHEET

1. THEORY ORIENTATION _____
   - WHOLE LANGUAGE
   - LITERATURE BASED
   - LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE

2. INTEGRATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM _____
   - SCIENCE
   - MATH
   - SOCIAL STUDIES
   - MUSIC/ART/P.E.

3. NATURAL CONNECTIONS _____
   - PROCESS WRITING
   - READING/WRITING CONNECTION

4. READERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS _____
   - HANDICAPPED
   - GIFTED
   - POOR READERS
   - CULTURALLY/LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE

5. VOCABULARY _____

TOTAL _____

Preservice Teacher's Name_____
Date_____
Comments_____
_____
_____
_____
_____